

For modern man the preservation of his kind
 is no longer
 exposed to the same dangers, nor needs the
 same sacrifices;
 yet this impulse to self-immolation is still
 there, still
 liable to demand its outlet. Some find that
 in parent-
 hood, some in ascetic religion, some in work.
 The artist
 who sacrifices himself to creation as his only
 god and to
 his works as hungry offspring, may little
 guess what
 ancient instincts, strangely disguised, he is
 obeying. But
 ancient instincts, like ancient gentlemen, are
 not always
 infallible, though they may feel so. And
 human sacrifice,
 even when it is self-sacrifice, is often a relic
 of primitive
 savagery, far less noble than it looks.

There is, too, another reason which may
 tempt a
 modern writer too much to spurn the world.
 We suffer
 today from a great gulf between our ethical
 and our
 aesthetic feelings, between actions we think
 good and
 useful, and actions we think splendid. That is
 a very real
 evil of modern civilisation; and regret for a
 past when the
 life of state and citizen rested on a basis of
 more vivid
 physical activity, when a man's career could
 more often:
 seem good to his imagination as well as his
 reason, to
 his senses as well as his moral sense, is
 something more
 than mere romanticism. The state, lovely to
 the Athenian
 'as a mistress', has become, in the phrase of
 Anatole
 France, **un monsieur piteux et disgracieux*
assis derriere
un guichet'. The individual has found life, as

it grows
safer, grow also more prosaic. In
consequence, the youth
of 1914 positively thrilled at the idea of a
new crusade,
satisfying at last both conscience and
imagination at once.
It was an illusion: the old consecrated
banners dropped to
dust above our heads. But the need was real.
This sense
of the drabness of our age, felt so strongly
by Flaubert
in writing *L'Education Sentimentale* that he
swore never to
treat modern life again, increases the
tendency of the